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May 31, 2012

WASHINGTON – In a letter this week, Congressman Charles F. Bass (NH-02) and 31 other Members of Congress from across the country urged Speaker Boehner to support Senate-passed language to preserve the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) as House and Senate negotiators work toward a final conference report for the Transportation Bill.

Bass said:

"The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been, and continues to be, a vital component of preserving open spaces in New Hampshire and the rest of the nation. Projects such as the Newfound Pathway at Newfound Lake and the state purchase of Temple Mountain were achieved through the use of LWCF funds, for example.

"As the summer tourism season gets underway in the Granite State, it's easy to see the impact of this program on our parks, forests, lakes, rivers, and outdoor recreation sites as thousands of visitors enjoy our state's natural resources. Not only does LWCF help to preserve our environment, it supports jobs in the outdoor recreation, forest products, and tourism industries.

"My colleagues and I remain committed to preserving LWCF so that important conservation projects throughout the country can continue."

The text of Bass' letter to Speaker Boehner follows:

May 29, 2012

Dear Speaker Boehner:

We are writing to ask that you support inclusion of Senate-passed language on the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the Transportation conference. As you may know, LWCF was created in the spirit of reinvesting the revenues from the sale of our national resources into future resources for all Americans.

LWCF has had incredible bipartisan support over its near half-century of existence, touching all 50 states and nearly every county in America. It is a continuing investment in the economic driver that our federal, state and local public lands represent. The parks, trails, forests, wildlife refuges, battlefields, historic sites, hunting and working lands sustained by LWCF funding support an outdoor recreation and tourism sector that contributes a total of \$1.06 trillion annually to the American economy, supporting 9.4 million jobs (1 out of every 15 jobs in the U.S.).

This well-envisioned toolbox is critical for all Americans as it fosters successful partnerships with states, localities, private organizations and landowners to meet unique local conservation, recreation and historic preservation needs across the country. LWCF has been the solution to

increasing access for hunters and anglers to make public lands public, protecting places sportsmen enjoy from big game habitat to their own backyards, as well as preserving historical treasures from Civil War battlefields to our most recent history, such as the United Flight 93 Memorial in Pennsylvania. LWCF helps to ensure that our ranchers and forest owners can stay on the land, and that our local communities can have parks and outdoor recreation sites.

These varied benefits of LWCF would be sustained by a provision in the Senate Transportation bill that would keep LWCF going in the coming years; would improve recreation access for hunting, fishing, and other recreation; and would ensure that a defined portion of the funds deposited in the LWCF account over the next two years are used for authorized purposes. This provision – the LWCF/RESTORE Act amendment – was approved by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 76-22. We believe it directly addresses several of the most urgent conservation, access and funding problems facing American hunters and anglers, outdoor businesses, and recreationists today.

As the Transportation conference between the House and Senate proceeds, we strongly urge you to work to ensure that the LWCF/RESTORE Act provision in the Senate bill is included in the final legislation.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Bass (NH-02)
Steven LaTourette (OH-14)
Robert Dold (IL-10)
Frank LoBiondo (NJ-02)
Jim Gerlach (PA-06)
David Reichert (WA-08)
Frank Guinta (NH-01)
Daniel Lungren (CA-03)
Howard Coble (NC-06)
Robert Wittman (VA-01)
Peter King (NY-03)
Ken Calvert (CA-44)
Mike Simpson (ID-02)
Tom Petri (WI-06)
Sean Duffy (WI-07)
Tom Rooney (FL-16)
Nan Hayworth (NY-19)
Brian Bilbray (CA-50)
Leonard Lance (NJ-07)
Mike Fitzpatrick (PA-08)
Frank Wolf (VA-10)
Todd Platts (PA-19)
Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ-11)
Chris Gibson (NY-20)
Charles Dent (PA-15)

Pat Meehan (PA-07)
Roscoe Bartlett (MD-06)
Michael Grimm (NY-13)
Judy Biggert (IL-13)
Randy Hultgren (IL-14)
Jeff Fortenberry (NE-01)
Chris Smith (NJ-04)

Both Senators Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) supported the LWCF/RESTORE Act provision in the Senate Transportation Bill in March.

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